Gov 50.08: Social Identity II

Prof. Kathleen E. Powers

1

Learning Objectives

- Apply insights from social identity theory, including approaches to reducing intergroup bias, to different foreign policy problems.
- Explain how social identity can contribute to intrastate conflict and impede COIN operations.
- Make an argument for how COIN practices could be adjusted to account for parochial group identities.
- Explain the relationship between social identification, nationalism, and conflict.
- Explain how social identity shapes attitudes toward international trade.
- Apply insights from SIT to theoretical debates about competition under anarchy.

2

Social Identity Theory

- Broad question:
  - How does social identity contribute to the causes of and solutions to international conflict & competition?
- Specific questions:
  - What is ethnic identity? How and why do ethnic divisions create conflict?
  - How should identity inform counterinsurgency practices?
  - What is the relationship between nationalism and interstate conflict?
  - Can "supranational" identities foster interstate cooperation?

3

Summary from last week

- People categorize themselves and others into groups, and make social comparisons.
  - Dartmouth students are community-minded & cult-y, while Harvard students are arrogant.
- People tend to like their ingroup more, because it makes them feel good (=> self-esteem).
- Under the right conditions, ingroup love becomes outgroup hate.
- Ethnic identification can lead to outgroup derogation and (sometimes extreme) violence, but historical contingencies shape whether ethnicity will be salient and promote/exacerbate conflict.

4

Identity & Intrastate Conflict

- What constitutes an "ethnic group" according to Horowitz, and what makes it distinct from the "minimal groups" psychologists study?
  - "a sense of collective belonging, which could be based on common descent, language, history, culture, race, or religion (or some combination of these" (Varshney 2007, p. 277).
- How are ethnic groups compared, and how can politics contribute to intergroup comparison?
- How can ethnic identification contribute to conflict – and under what conditions?
  - "It is not ethnicity per se but ethnicity made salient by violent conflict that leads to a vicious cycle in which violence and parochialism reinforce each other" (Sambanis et al. 2012, p. 808).
  - "Countries can sometimes become trapped in recurrent conflict because of the way that the history of group interactions affects individual social identification." (Sambanis and Shayo 2013, p. 319).

5

Reducing Ingroup Bias

- Identities are not fixed – people hold multiple social identities, which may be more or less important and more or less salient.
- They can develop new identities, too.
- Social identity research points to several strategies for reducing intergroup bias:
  - Decategorizaiton
  - Recategorization (CIIM)
  - Dual Identity

6

2

Identity & Intrastate Conflict

- How are current COIN strategies incomplete, according to Sambanis, Schulhofer-Wohl, and Shayo (2012)?

7

Identity & Intrastate Conflict

- How are current COIN strategies incomplete, according to Sambanis, Schulhofer-Wohl, and Shayo (2012)?
- "We must get the Iraqi populace off the fence – and on the side of the Iraqi government." – General Petreaus

8

Identity & Intrastate Conflict

- "How can the conduct of counterinsurgency (COIN) be better designed to shift violent, fragmented societies to a peaceful equilibrium?" – Sambanis, Schulhofer-Wohl, and Shayo (2012), p. 805

9

National Identities, Conflict, & Trade

- "The **dark side** of a strong national identity might... be a greater predisposition to conflict with other nations (Sambanis and Shayo 2013, 320).
- Nationalism can lead to interstate conflict & war.
- How does Mercer connect SIT to international conflict & competition? What are the strengths & weaknesses of his argument?

World Leaders Warn Against Nationalism At World War I Remembrance Ceremony

NATIONALISM

FOLLOW ME!

10

National Identities, Conflict, & Trade

- **In the public:** Nationalism is associated with "authoritarianism, intolerance, and warmongering" (Li and Brewer 2004, p. 728).
  - Positively correlated with militarism (Hurwitz & Peffley 1987) and conflictual foreign policy preferences such as desire to use force against Iran (Herrmann et al. 2009) or nuclear armament (Feshbach 1987).
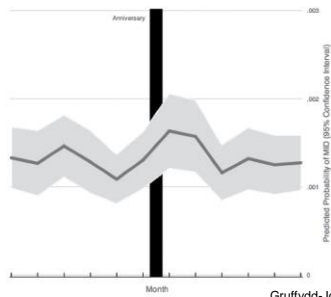
GLOBAL TIMES

HOME   CHINA   BIZ   WORLD   OPINION   LIFE   ARTS   SCI-TECH   ODD

HOME >> OP-ED

Rising nationalism in US biggest threat to the world

By Yu Ning Source:Global Times Published: 2018/6/19 22:08:40

11

National Identities, Conflict, & Trade

- **In the public:** Nationalism is associated with "authoritarianism, intolerance, and warmongering" (Li and Brewer 2004, p. 728).
  - Positively correlated with militarism (Hurwitz & Peffley 1987) and conflictual foreign policy preferences such as desire to use force against Iran (Herrmann et al. 2009) or nuclear armament (Feshbach 1987).
- **Between states**: Nationalism has been implicated in specific wars (e.g., WWI, Football War between El Salvador and Honduras).
  - And more recently, quantitative evidence shows a relationship between nationalism and militarized interstate dispute initiation.
  - E.g., Gruffydd-Jones (2007) shows that the probability of conflict increases in the period following a country's national day celebration (e.g., independence days, victory day celebrations).

12

National Identities, Conflict, & Trade

Gruffydd-Jones (2017) p. 713

13

National Identities, Conflict, & Trade

- Trade attitudes are supposed to stem from individual material self-interest: you support free trade if you/your employment industry benefit from free trade.
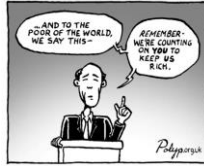

14

National Identities, Conflict, & Trade

- Mutz and Kim suggest something different.
- What is their primary argument about public opposition to free trade?

15

National Identities, Conflict, & Trade

- Hypotheses about in-group favoritism:
  - Compatriotism (maximize national, not global, benefits)
  - Intergroup competition (maximize relative, not absolute, benefits)
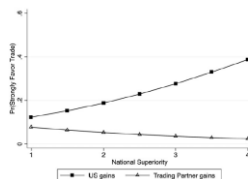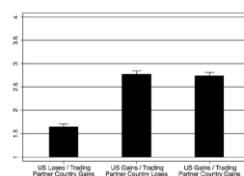- Moderators: nationalism, social dominance orientation

16

National Identities, Conflict, & Trade

- Experimental manipulation
  - U.S. **loses**, partner **gains**:
    - "For each [1/10/100/1000] person/people in the U.S. who lose[s] a job and can no longer provide for their family, [1/10/100/1000] person/people in a country that we trade with will gain [a] new job[s] and now be able to provide for their family."
  - U.S. **gains**, partner **gains**:
    - "For each [1/10/100/1000] person/people in the U.S. who gain[s] a job and is able to provide for their family, [1/10/100/1000] person/people in a country that we trade with will gain [a] new job[s] and now be able to provide for their family."
  - U.S. **gains**, partner **loses**:
    - "For each [1/10/100/1000] person/people in the U.S. who gain[s] a job and is able to provide for their family, [1/10/100/1000] person/people in a country that we trade with will lose [a] a job[s] and will no longer be able to provide for their family."
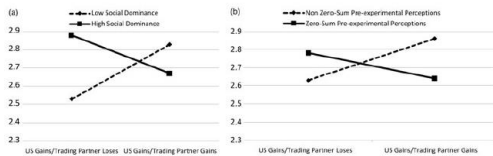
17

National Identities, Conflict, & Trade

- Results: Compatriotism

18

National Identities, Conflict, & Trade

- Results: Intergroup Competition

19

National Identities, Conflict, & Trade

- How might Mutz & Kim's results change if the experiment identified a specific other country? Why?
- What are the implications of their research, if any, for current debates around international trade?

20

Supranational Identification

- Can a supranational identity emerge to dampen nationalism's sometimes pernicious effects?
- Evaluate the following statement: Social identification both causes and provides a solution to intergroup conflict in international politics.

21

Fin.

Next time: Supranational Identity, Alternatives to Competition

22